



Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Stunning 15ct blue diamond becomes the most expensive ever sold at auction

The 15.10 carat De Beers Blue diamond became one of the most valuable diamonds ever to be offered at auction after going on sale with Sotheby's Hong Kong..

The rough stone was discovered by Petral Diamonds in South Africa's Cullinan mine in April 2021.

The Cullinan mine is the source of the largest gem-quality rough diamond ever found - the Cullinan Diamond which was unearthed in 1905.

The two largest stones cut from that historic rough diamond are today part of the Crown Jewels and seven other major diamonds from it are privately owned by the Queen.

Ahead of the sale, Sotheby's Senior Vice President and Sales Director for Jewelry Frank Everett said the De Beers Cullinan Blue diamond is remarkable on many levels.

'It's rare because of the size. It's over 15 carats. It's a vivid blue. It's internally flawless. And really one of the most rare aspects of it is the cut,' he said.



This Month's Roundup of Stories

- 15ct Blue Diamond
- First Silversmith Class
- Steampunk Prospector
- May's Birthstone - Emerald
- Spinosaurus
- Bench Tips

I think we're going to see tremendous interest in this stone when it finally comes to auction.

'The market is very strong for jewelry at the moment, has been really for the last several years, but one of the strongest segments is colored diamonds. And one of the strongest colors is blue.'

Read the entire article at

[DailyMail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk)



Clubhouse Address:
3357 Susan Dr.
Spring Hill, FL 34606

Secretary's Report

Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting

Date 4/13/2022

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at 7:07pm.

We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent prayer.

There were 3 new members to recognize; Erik Ulano and his children; Ronin & Harper.

There were 2 guests in attendance; Francois and Harper's friend, Kira Johnson.

Michele Evans made a motion to accept the minutes of our April meeting as printed in the newsletter, Roger Wheeler seconded. Passed by all members.

Old Business

President Birx began her announcements by stating that Treasurer Janet Wheeler had sent a check to the Geology Department at USF for \$400 for the Withlacoochee Rockhounds Scholarship Fund.

The IRS paperwork for our 501.c3 has been filled out by our treasurer and sent certified to the IRS.
We will get our formal card after 3 weeks.

Lauren Bell gave a report about her trip to Hogg Mine in La Grange, GA.
She also stated that Graves Mountain will be open for digging May 21st -23rd and she would add that on to our club's FaceBook group.
She said at Grave's Mountain that you can find rutile, lazulite, hematite, and pyrophyllite.

Lynn Walters stated that there is no word from the Vulcan Mine. She will continue to try to contact them regarding our field trips.

Lynn said that Weeki Wachi Preserve, Linda Pederson Park, and Pine Island Beach are good places to hunt for shells and fossils.

As far as the creeks, because of the weather, they are too low to sift and the rivers are too high to hunt for agatized coral.

Also, Jackson Crossroads is permanently closed to the public.

Pam Gonzalez and Janice Wojcik are teaching a silversmithing class for beginners on Saturday April 30th from 10-5.

The cost is \$25 and students will set a small cab in silver.

Next month's program is entitled "Love Rocks?". Everyone will be asked "Why do you love rocks?".

The suggestion is to bring your favorite rock or specimen and tell the story of how you found it.

President Birx announced the winner of our 2022 William Holland Scholarship.
The winner was Lauren Bell.

Lynn Walters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Roberta Oldread seconded, and passed by all.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date 4/27/2022

Attending Board members; Judith Birx, Janice Wocjik, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Roberta Oldread, Lauren Bell, and Michael Steverson.

Board meeting started at 7:00pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.

President Judith Birx began the meeting by announcing that Lauren Bell donated a used Pixie to the club.

However, it is in such bad shape that it must be completely rebuilt with many new parts. Melodye Steverson is taking on the task and got quotes from two companies for the parts, for a total of \$710.79.

President Birx asked for a motion to have the club pay for the parts. She also reminded the Board that Secretary Steverson had been given permission to spend \$700 for an additional pixie in the past and had not been able to find one.

After a short discussion, a motion was made by Michael Steverson to allow the repairs to proceed and be paid for by the club. Seconded by Janet Wheeler, approved by all.

President Birx then asked Past President Ralph Barber how the Gem Show plans were going. He replied in the affirmative. She announced that Vice President Janice Wojcik will be the Gem Show Marketing Leader and Gem Show Committee Co-Leader with Ralph Barber. A third Co-Leader is Treasurer Janet Wheeler.

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First Silversmithing class of the year!

Nice to have our group together making nice things again!

Six Rockhound members came to the clubhouse on Saturday morning with zero experience in silversmithing and left later that afternoon having created beautiful, hand-crafted, sterling silver pendants.

They were the six students in the Withlacoochee Rockhounds' inaugural 2022 Silversmithing Class, a beginners workshop that introduced them to soldering techniques with a butane torch, creating a bezel setting for a cabochon and creating embellishments to finish off the pendant.

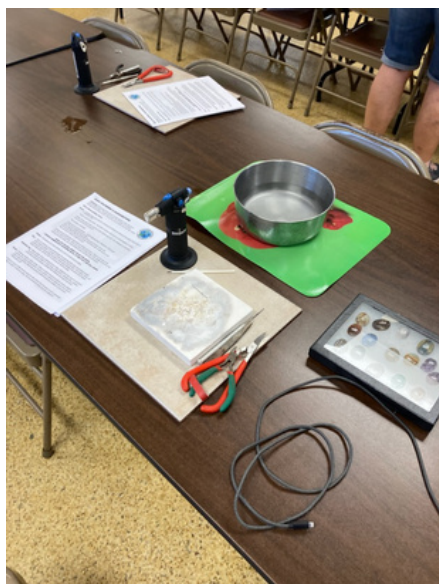
Taught by Rockhound members VP Janice Wojcik and Pam Gonzalez, the students got one-on-one training in the fundamentals of making sterling silver jewelry.

Tools, torches and all were provided by the club, and silver sheet and bezel were covered by a \$25 materials fee.

Janice and Pam will be offering another Beginners Silversmithing Class #1 on Saturday, June 11th.

It is a day-long workshop beginning at 10 am and ending at 5 pm.

Sign up at the meeting on Wednesday, May 11, or send an email to jfwojcik@verizon.net. Priority goes to members who have not yet taken the class. So if you've ever wanted to learn how to make silver jewelry, but had no idea how to start...the Withlacoochee Rockhounds has the course for you. You'll leave the workshop proudly saying "I made this!"



Hogg Mine, La Grange, GA

A new column from Lauren Bell

April's adventure normally concerns Graves Mtn but with the dig date pushed back till May, I needed to get my dig on!

I chose a quick weekend trip to Hogg Mine in La Grange, Georgia.

It's pretty much an 8-hour drive up 19 and 27.

Dig starts at 9 am every Saturday morning so I just leisurely drive up on Friday and come home on Sunday.

Anyways, the mine was super muddy on Saturday morning due to a light rain.

I found the big 4 at The Hogg Mine, LaGrange, GA (tourmaline, Rose Quartz, beryl, aquamarine) plus a couple of garnets which are uncommon there.

My bigger pieces of the tourmaline in matrix and rose quartz are soaking in water and the smaller pieces of the beryl and aquamarine are as well.

Didn't find huge pieces of those but happy with the small mostly complete crystals I did find.

I lucked out on the Rose Quartz and obtained high-quality pink tones without busting boulder ledges for it.

I instead poked along the ledges in the shade until I found a half-buried boulder with luscious peach color.

All in all, another successful dig adventure by the Steampunk Prospector!



The Steampunk Prospector



continued from page 2

VP Wojcik asked for the vendor list and will send out flyers to the past vendors and to all jewelry schools as well.

She also plans to contact Channel 13 to have a reporter cover our Show on Friday morning for publicity.

As in the past, long time member Kelly Johnson will advertise our Gem Show in Rock & Gem Magazine.

VP Wojcik will update the verbiage of the ad to attract more attendees.

Contacts in the ad will be Ralph Barber and Janet Wheeler.

Programs for monthly meetings were next on the agenda.

VP Wojcik will contact the Geology Department at USF for potential presenters.

Treasurer Wheeler stated that we got a Thank You note from USF regarding our recent donation to the Withlacoochee Rockhounds Endowment Fund there.

President Birx asked VP Wojcik for the total cost of the Beginning Silversmithing Class she and member Pam Gonzales presented on April 30th for 6 club members.

She responded \$212.67, with some supplies left over for the next class.

Board member Lauren Bell made a motion to have the club pay for the cost of those supplies, seconded by Treasurer Janet Wheeler. Approved.

President Birx informed "Free Jewelry Class" teacher, Lauren Bell, to remind potential students that they must be members of the club and they must RSVP if they plan to come to the class.

President Birx asked VP Wojcik if she was planning more Beginning Silversmithing Classes or would be giving Silversmithing 2 Classes.

The VP replied she and Pam would do more beginning classes and then more advanced classes as the students moved up in skill.

Signed disclaimers were suggested for the Silver classes.

VP Wojcik will research this and will report back.

President Birx noted that Board member and Club IT Guy, Michael Steverson, had put the "Name that Slab" Game from the April meeting on YouTube for all to enjoy.

Gem Show Committee Co-Chair Wojcik asked President Birx whom she would suggest helping her get the ball rolling for planning the show.

President Birx suggested she enlist Board member Roberta Oldread as Ms. Oldread had helped with the Gem Show for years and is very effective on Facebook.

Ms. Oldread said she would do whatever was needed to help.

VP Wojcik suggested the club get a Square account and reader to enable us to accept credit cards. This would allow us to take cards for admittance to our club, Gem Show, and memberships. This will be researched and discussed at the next Board meeting..

The meeting ended at 8:05 pm

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson

The May Birthstone: The Emerald

Is Your Birthday This Month?

If you're celebrating a birthday this month, we've got good news. Your birthstone is the beautiful emerald, a popular, in-demand gemstone that perfectly encapsulates the bright, summery vibe that May also embodies.

Here's everything you might need to know about emeralds — no matter when you were born.

Emeralds are technically a type of the mineral beryl. Related to aquamarine and morganite, emeralds are set apart from regular beryl by their color. Trace metals and impurities, as well as chromium and vanadium, give emeralds their distinct dark green hue, which makes them textbook emeralds versus just plain ol' green beryl.

Unlike other gemstones, the impurities that can give emeralds their color do not detract from the stones' value. The deeper an emerald's green hue, the more valuable it's considered. The rarest, and therefore most valuable, emeralds are often more of a deep green-blue than a straight green.

Emeralds are relatively hard, though their inclusions can result in some brittleness that makes the gemstones subject to breakage.

Emeralds can be found in Colombia, Brazil, Afghanistan and Zambia. The world's largest emerald, however, was discovered in Madagascar, weighing in at more than 1,181 pounds and measuring more than four feet long.

Today, Colombia is the largest producer of emeralds, with estimates saying that the country produces anywhere from 50% to 95% of the world's entire emerald inventory. Mining in the country has increased substantially over the last decades. Elsewhere, emerald mining is popular in Zambia, the second-largest producer. The famed Egyptian mines of history, though, are in ruins and abandoned.

Synthetic emeralds are now available as well. These are made via either flux-growth or hydrothermal processes. In the former, chromium, beryllium and other elements are dissolved into molten flux and beryl crystallization occurs. In the latter, components are dissolved in acidic solutions at high temperatures, before cooling, to allow crystallization to occur.

Read the entire article at [Yamron.com](https://yamron.com)



Spinosaurus dinosaur 'hunted underwater', new research finds

A new paper explains how the Spinosaurus and its close relative Baryonyx had dense bones that allowed them to submerge themselves to hunt.

Scientists have debated whether Spinosaurus pursued prey in the water, or snapped it up in the shallows. For the latest research published in Nature, a team including Dr Ibrahim and lead author Dr Matteo Fabbri from Chicago's Field Museum compared femur and rib bone cross-sections from 250 species of extinct and living animals.

They included seals, whales, elephants, penguins, hippos, alligators, mice, hummingbirds, mosasaurs and plesiosaurs.

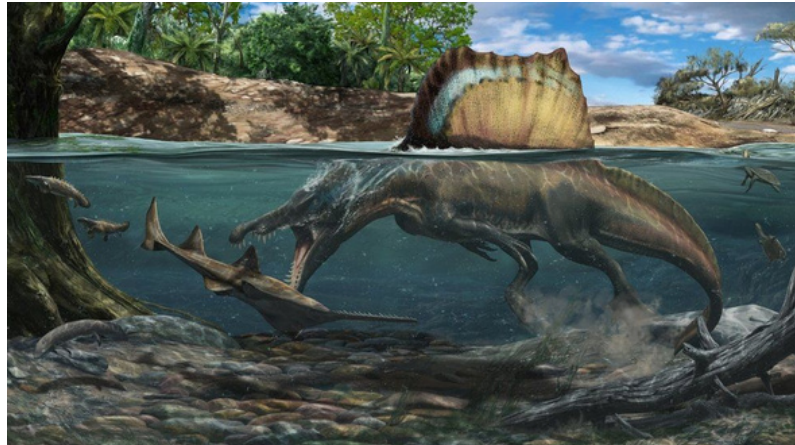
Subsequently, the scientists claim to have found a clear link between bone density and aquatic foraging behaviour.

The animals that submerged themselves underwater to find food had bones that were almost completely solid throughout, while the bones of land-dweller had hollow centres.

Dense bone is believed to help with buoyancy control.

Read the entire article at

[BBC.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-56811684)



Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club, 3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month. Contact Michael Steverson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and the club website. It will benefit both your business and our club.

Advertisers Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website. The club can use the monthly income. Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com or send to: Withlacoochee Rockhounds PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34811-6634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$25.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

2022 Club Officers and Appointees

President	Judith Birx	352.587.1702	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President	Janice Wojcik	813.677.6263	jfwojcik@verizon.net
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Gem Bag Coordinator	Gloria DuPont	352.848.5199	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Judith Birx (President)	Janice Wojcik (Vice President)	Melodye Steverson (Secretary)	Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)
Roberta Oldread (2022)	Lynn Walters (2022)	Lauren Bell (2022)	Michael Steverson (2022)
			Ralph Barber (Past President)



Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

LAYOUT TOOLS

Dimensions on some features of a design can be fluid while others must be accurate for the design to work. When precision on a piece is important, good layout techniques are essential.

These are the tools that I rely upon to get holes in the right place, to achieve correct angles, and to cut pieces the correct length.

I like crisp sharp lines to follow, so I often coat surfaces with a dark marker and scribe my layout lines onto the metal. A square makes quick work of checking right angles or marking where to cut, and the thin center punch helps me mark a place to drill holes exactly where I want them.

Finally, a good set of dividers is probably my favorite layout tool. They let me quickly mark a strip for cutting, swing an arc, and divide a line or curve into as many equal segments as I need. I keep at least one set of dividers in every toolbox.

INVENTORY RECORD

In an ideal world each of us who sells their jewelry has a good record with photos of all pieces in our inventory. We use it for insurance purposes, to record the cost to produce, to note where the item was sent out on consignment, and maybe to store descriptive text for marketing. Eventually, we note in the record when the piece was sold and for how much.

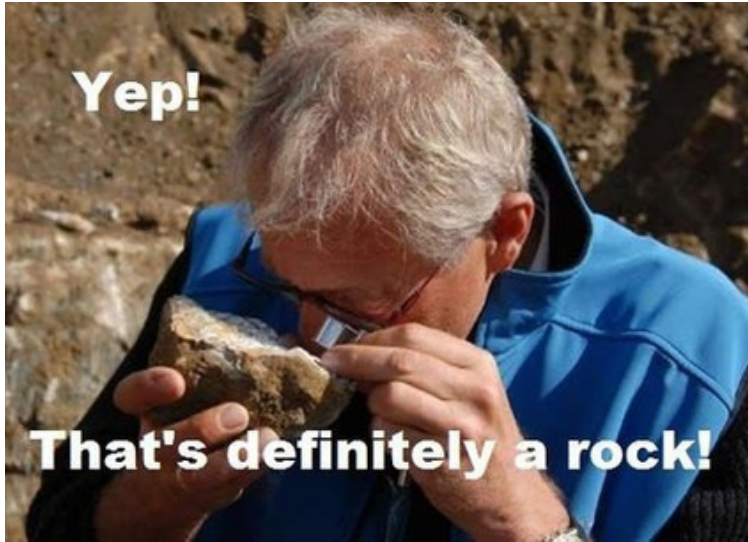
It's nice to also have good pictures of each piece, but sometimes we don't have time for a full-on photo session. In situations like this it's worth doing a quick group shot with the help of a phone, a camera, a scanner, or even a color copier. The quality is at least sufficient for an accurate identification in case a piece is lost.



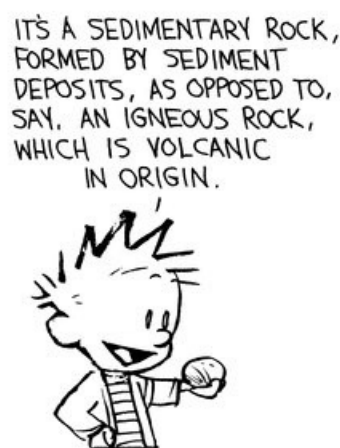
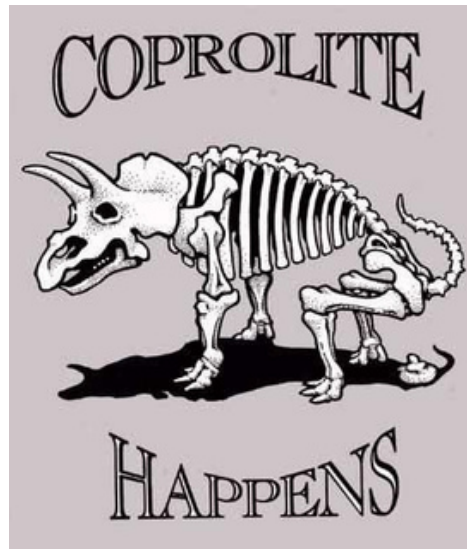
Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books

Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith

Rock Talk Funny Papers



Workers refilling the Earth's core with molten lava during the Great Lava Shortage of 1912.





From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

If you missed our April meeting, you missed a rousing round of Name That Slab! by club VP Janice Wojcik.

Jewelry classes have started back up. Lauren Bell instructed in her second one for this year.

Thank you, Lauren!

Janice Wojcik and Pam Gonzalez held a Silversmithing class on Monday, the 2nd.

Great turnout and students left with their creations.

Thank you, Janice and Pam!

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to the next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you still are not receiving them, please contact me, and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address. I have a few of you who unsubscribed from the mailings. I cannot add you back to the list. You have to subscribe to get back on the list. It's a permissions thing.

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for Programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand its educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

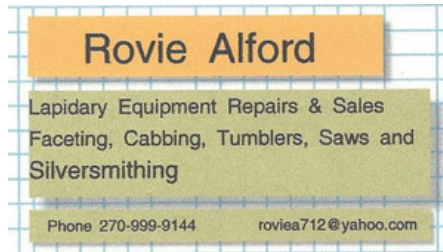
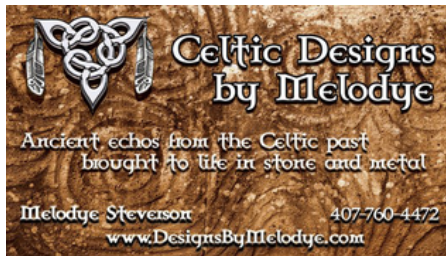
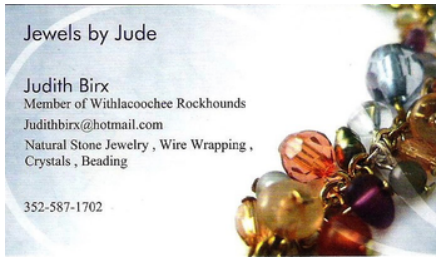
Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.

These are SCAMS.

Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.

Rockhounds Advertisers



Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.

Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and the club website. It will benefit both your business and our club.

If you ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.

The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.

Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.

Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com or send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

2022

Annual Dues: Individual member, \$25.00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00.

☐

Check if returning member

☐

Check if current member
with change of information

☐

Check if new member

☐

Check if under 18

Please Print Clearly

Last name

First Name

Street Address:

City

State

ZIP

Phone Number (s)

Email address:

You may now fill in the fields on this form if you are viewing it on your computer or tablet.
Each field may be clicked on and then you may type in your information.
You will still need to print out the form, but your added information should show on the form.

Give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

2022